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# ST. JAMES' HALL.

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 6TH, 1880.

## HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL PROGRAMME

OF

## PIANOFORTE RECITAL,

TO BE GIVEN BY

MR. O. A. KING,

PIANIST TO

H. R. H. PRINCESS LOUISE.

WRITTEN BY

MR. J. W. F. HARRISON.

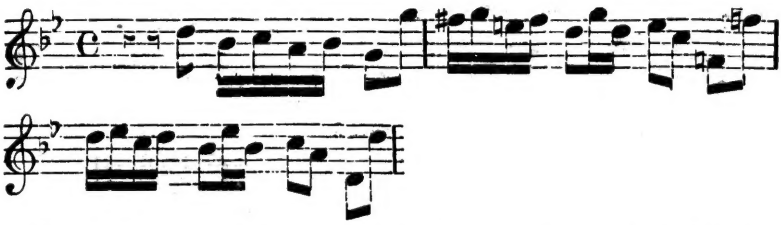
# PROGRAMME.

FANTASIA AND FUGUE. *G minor* (Organ). Arranged by Liszt.....*Bach*—1685, 1750.

A detailed analysis of the great G minor Fantasia and Fugue would require more space than can be devoted here, and be more calculated to confuse than assist, as a clear idea of the work could not be gained without a closer acquaintance with it than is possible at one hearing.

Originally written for the organ, its chief interest on the piano consists in its partial unsuitability for the instrument. What is, in the original, divided between hands and pedals has to be all produced by the hands alone, and Liszt in making this arrangement has displayed great ingenuity, particularly in the Fantasia, which presents very great technical difficulties, and is a noble specimen of Bach in his freer style of composition.

The Fugue is transcribed from the organ edition without alteration, being note for note the same ; the left hand has some exceedingly difficult work, as it has to play the pedal part as well as its own. The *subject* of the Fugue is as follows :



The *answer*, according to usage, is the same theme repeated immediately a fourth below, accompanied by the *counter-subject*

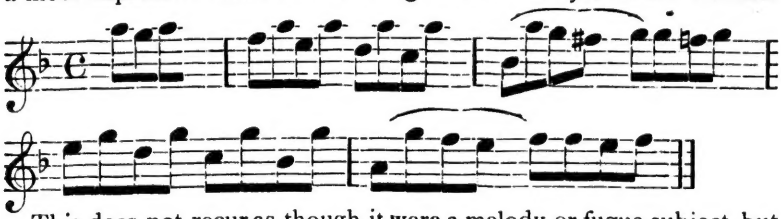
These, together with an *episode* or third subject,

form the text of the Fugue, which is worked out on these themes alone without the introduction of any fresh matter. By careful attention to the performance, and comparing it with these illustrations, a fair idea may be gained of the manner in which such a work is constructed.

PRELUDE AND TOCCATA. Op. 57 .....Vincenz Lachner, 1811.

Vincenz Lachner belongs to a family all the members of which are remarkable for great musical ability and also high moral worth and excellence of character. His father was an organist at Rain in Bavaria, was poor, but highly respected. All his brothers and sisters have been successful musicians, especially Franz, the greatest of the family. Vincenz, the youngest, born in 1811, was brought up at the Augsburg Gymnasium, became organist at Vienna, afterwards Court Kapellmeister at Mannheim, from 1836 to 1873, when he retired on a pension. His works are much admired by his countrymen, and the one before us is certainly in parts almost worthy of J. S. Bach.

The term "Toccata" (from "toccare" to touch,) has been applied to various forms of music. On the organ it is usually a very long brilliant cadence for either hands or pedals, treated as a solo, and is often used by Bach as an introduction to a Fugue. On the piano it has a similar character; the piece consists of one long passage which forms the subject, and is accompanied by whichever hand is unoccupied by the working out of the passage. The one before us opens with a majestic prelude in D minor, almost choral in effect, and, after working up with a bass in octaves, leads by a fine passage of chords to a most impressive climax introducing us to the subject of the Toccata



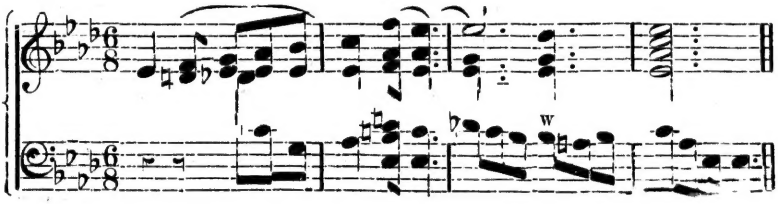
This does not recur as though it were a melody or fugue subject, but works itself out in fresh ramifications, leading to a resumption of the prelude which returns unexpectedly with the happiest effect. After this the Toccata proceeds exactly as at first in D minor until the bass takes possession of it when, by the introduction of an E flat where E natural had formerly been heard, the key is changed to B flat major, and the whole course of the subject altered. From here it progresses through G minor, then by the minor ninth on C to F major and so to the relative minor in which, with ever increasing brilliancy and rapidity, it progresses to the end.

BALLADE. *A flat*..... ..... .*Chopin*, 1809–1849

The term *Ballad* originally applied to a song containing a narrative of some kind, and Chopin seems to have adopted this meaning most fully in his *Ballades*, of which form of pianoforte music he may almost be called the creator. They are all pieces of great brilliancy, and may be admired even on the ground of the ample opportunity they offer for the display of *technique*, but no musical person of sensibility can fail to perceive that there is in all of them, but particularly in this, something behind the music, a train of thought and emotion far beyond the mere form into which it is crystallized. If the daily joys and sorrows of any ordinary person of feeling could be portrayed in music they would be touching and worth listening to; but when so morbid and sensitive a mind as Chopin's, seconded by a genius so transcendant, tells us in music of all he suffers and thinks, it is worth while trying to get below the form and to penetrate, so far as we may, the poet's mind.

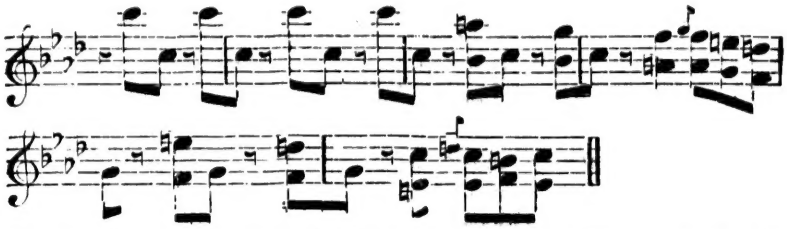
This, however, each person must interpret for himself, all that analysis can do is to simply point out *musical* beauties of which this piece is full, showing a wonderful power, not alone of poetic expression but also of musical *form*. This perfect control of *form* is the more surprising as Chopin's subjects are often of so vague and fitful a character that his music seems to hover on the confines of formlessness. His harmonies and changes are so startling that we often wonder where he is leading us, but he, nevertheless, works his ideas out clearly to a logical and grand conclusion.

The first few bars of this piece must be listened to attentively as the subject they contain is important, and recurs more than once. It is of a graceful and almost playful character, giving little indication of the climax of passion to which it is to be worked up later.

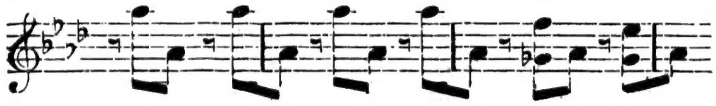


This is rudely interrupted by a harsh blow of an octave A flat for both hands, followed by a very broken subject in octaves. This closes with a few brilliant passages leading to a short resumption of the

opening theme already given. After a sombre, mysterious finish in the bass, and a long pause on the common chord of the key, the real subject, on which most of the piece is founded, enters *pianissimo* in the following dainty manner :



The careless quaintness of this commencement soon deepens into solemn earnest, and from that to fervid passion. During sixty-four bars this wonderful theme goes through every shade of emotion from light *abandon* to excitement and deep despair. This again resolves itself into *bravura* passages for twenty-eight bars more, after which the subject recurs, always in the same dreamy manner but this time on different notes.



From here it is developed from A flat to C sharp minor and back to A flat, in which it is varied in every imaginable manner, in the bass and in the treble alternately. At last, accompanied by a gusty threatening bass, it works its way up vehemently in the treble with a grand succession of chords until, as a climax, the almost forgotten theme with which the piece opened bursts forth, now no longer placid, but advancing with resistless force to the close.

No words can do justice to the surpassing beauties of this work. Putting poetic meaning on one side, its musical form, notwithstanding its fantastic character and numerous changes, is simply wonderful. It almost defies analysis, for quotations sufficient to give an adequate idea of it would involve printing the piece entire.

BERCEUSE .....*Chopin.*

This forms an excellent contrast to the foregoing. Its chief peculiarity is in the bass, which has throughout the same fundamental note and almost the same chords in every bar. This gives it a placid and monotonous effect admirably suited to the title. The treble con-

sists of a quiet melody afterwards varied by passages whose extreme delicacy and rapidity require perfect execution, and render the piece, although a quiet one, a veritable *tour de force.*

VALSE CAPRICE .....*Rubinstein.*

Anton Rubinstein, whom it is safe to call, with the exception of Liszt, the greatest pianist in the world, has also a high position as a composer, both for his own instrument and the orchestra. His vocal music also is very fine, and his duets for two female voices are remarkable, being so thoroughly original in style and treatment as to form an entirely new school in that branch of composition. The Valse Caprice is an instance of what a merely light style of music can be made in the hands of a great artist. It is particularly brilliant, and at the same time worked out with consummate skill.

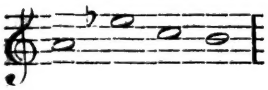
"CARNAVAL," Scenes Mignonnes sur Quatre Notes...*Schumann.* 1810-1856.

Préambule, Pierrot, Arlequin, Valse noble, Eusebius, Florestan, Coquette et Replique, Sphinxes, Papillons, A. S. C. H., S. C. H. A., (Lettres Dansantes), Chiarina, Chopin, Estrella, Reconnaissance, Pantalon et Colombine, Valse Allemande, Paganini, Aveu, Promenade, Pause, Marche des "Davidsbündler" contre les Philistines.

Although many of Schumann's compositions have greater artistic worth than the "Carnaval," a peculiar interest attaches to this work through its being, more than his others, connected with his own inner life. The "Quatre Notes" on which he has built these "Scenes Mignonnes" are A. S. C. H., which spell the name of a Bohemian town which was endeared to him by pleasant associations, and are also the only letters in his own name which form part of the musical scale.

The German way of naming a flat is to place the letter S after the name of the note, thus, Es signifies E flat, and when pronounced sounds like S, and is used to denote that letter by Schumann. The note B is called by the Germans H, and so he has two means of spelling the name of his favorite town in music.

A. Es. C. H.



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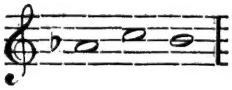
As. C. H.



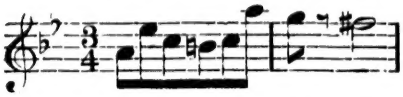
both of which he uses; and it is interesting to observe, whilst commencing so many of these sketches with the same four notes, how

completely he avoids monotony or any appearance of self-plagiarism. Thus, " Arlequin " commences

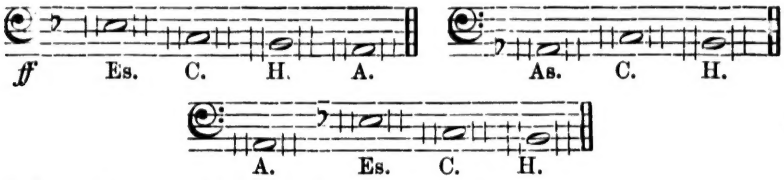
A. Es. C. H.

" Florestan."

A. Es. C. H.

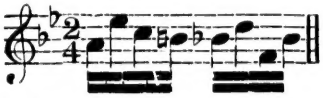


The Sphinxes stalk along the key-board with ponderous stony tread to the same notes




followed in graceful contrast by the " Papillons,"

A. Es. C. H.



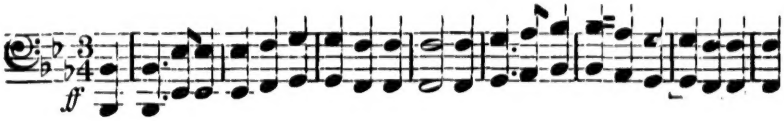
The " Valse noble," " Lettres Dansantes," " Estrella," " Reconnaissances," " Pantalon et Colombine," " Valse Allemande," " Aveu," " Promenade," and " Davidsbündler " March, all open with the same four notes, and yet in no case is there sameness or even resemblance. Besides the interest attaching to this peculiar construction certain numbers have special meanings. Florestan and Eusebius represent himself,—Eusebius the calm and contemplative, Florestan the impassioned, side of his nature.

These names were often used as *noms de plume*, and appended to the articles which he wrote for the musical journal published in Leipsic and edited by himself. " Chiarina " stands for Clara Wieck, afterwards his wife. " Estrella," for Ernestine, an earlier love, whose engagement with him was broken off. The exciting " March of David's Spearmen against the Philistines " is an allegorical picture of the progress of true art over all obstacles.

Schumann himself describes the " Davidsbündler " as a secret society

existing only in his own imaginative brain, and devoted to the destruction of all that can hinder the progress of music, especially that antiquated pedantry known as "Philistinism," which is so thoroughly opposed to all true art.

In this march "Philistinism" is symbollized by the "Grandfather's Dance," an old-fashioned German air which appears in the bass,




then gathers strength and appears in the treble, stopping for a moment the course of the "Davidsbündler," who, however, quickly stifle it and it disappears, to reappear later, when it finally receives its quietus, after which the victors advance with ever increasing enthusiasm and excitement to the close. The whole march is full of wild fun, mingled with grim earnest.

As a framework for these personal reminiscences the "Carnaval" has been chosen with its usual characters, "Pierrot," "Arlequin," "Pantalon et Colombine." We have also a Preamble in which some of the subjects of the "Davidsbündler" March are anticipated, and a promenade, in which our fancy roams among the masquers; and, whilst we join the crowd in one street, we hear strange snatches of sounds from distant groups until slowly withdrawing from the scene the sights and sounds become fainter in an exquisite *piano* phrase, and the battle of David's Spearmen begins.

Mingled with all these are a few pieces,—"Reconnaissance," "Aveu," &c., simply miscellaneous compositions which the motley character of the work enabled him to insert without incongruity.

This fine work is most interesting, musically as well as poetically. It is so brilliant as to call for a high degree of virtuosity in the player, is full of grace, passion and ingenuity; it teems with imagination and with that wonderful power of description in which Schumann has rarely been rivalled, whether he describes actual scenes or mental pictures. In "Pierrot" we see the clown moving before us, even to his shambling gait, suggested by the quaint accent on the usually unaccented part of the bar. As "Arlequin" flits by we catch the glimmer of dazzling spangles, as with agile bound he disappears, all too quickly.

In the "Aveu" we have another class of musical poem, an exquisite piece of melody, full of tenderness and passion, a mere fragment, but one which speaks volumes.

The fight between the "Davidsbündler" and Philistinism has been long and bitter, and has resulted in the genius of Schumann resting long in the shades of non-appreciation; every year, however, makes his music more popular and brings his name nearer the place it should occupy as one of the greatest composers the world has ever seen.

BARCAROLE,
LEGENDE,
IMPROMPTU CAPRICE, } .....*Oliver A. King.*

Three well-contrasted pieces. The Barcarole has a flowing melody on a *arpeggio* bass. The Legende is of a more dramatic and impassioned character, while the Impromptu Caprice is quite a study in regard to brilliancy of execution, and is varied by the Larghetto movement forming the second part.

HUNGARIAN DANCE..... .....*Brahms*, 1833.

The above is a slight composition in which the Hungarian character will be readily recognized by the curious accentuation caused by the almost constant use of syncopation, which effect is of Magyar origin, together with the abundance of turns and embellishments which are derived from the gipsey music.

Besides being a fine pianist, Brahms is one of the greatest living German composers. Schumann early discovered his great powers, and wrote about him in his newspaper, which was always at the service of young and deserving musicians. He has written much chamber and orchestra music, besides a large number of songs. It is now too soon to say what will be his ultimate status, but some critics have not hesitated to place him already beside the greatest composers.

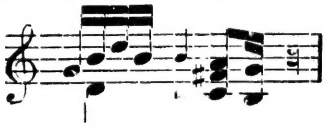
HUMORESKEN..... ..... Grieg—1843.

Eduard Grieg, composer and pianist, was born at Bergen in Norway, and studied at the Conservatorium at Leipzig. During his four years study there, he devoted himself chiefly to the romantic school. Chopin & Schumann have partly influenced his style which, however, owes more to the inspiration of his own national music than any other source. Although still a young man, his works place him in the first rank of living musicians, and, notwithstanding the Scandinavian character of his music, it is full of originality, both of ideas and treatment.

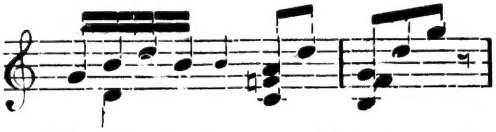
Undoubtedly, this fine musician, now residing and following his profession at Christiana, must every year become better known and appreciated wherever musical taste exists.

The "Humoresken" are two delightful sketches, which, as in most true humor, have an undercurrent of pathos and melancholy. The first, a minuet in G sharp minor, after a quaint and vigorous opening, full of reckless gaiety, leads, by a graceful interlude of four bars, to the second part, which is of a lighter and more playful character. After this, we have a gradual return to the first subject, *pianissimo*, then an increase to *fortissimo*, after which it dies away in fitful interchanges of the air between the two hands, concluding with a striking phrase where the treble and bass take it in unison.

The second, *allegretto con grazia*, opens in C major with a theme of the most exquisitely graceful character, worthy of Chopin, whose manner it slightly recalls, although the ideas are throughout perfectly original. The first part, consisting of only eight bars with a repeat, closes in G, and then, with an abrupt transition, the second commences in B minor with a bold and vigorous burst which, after eight bars more, ends with a perfect cadence in G as follows :



The next bar to this gives a curious surprise. Commencing in the same way as that just given it ends with a delightful change by the introduction of F natural.



The course of the piece is thus turned by the dominant chord on G, prepared by this unexpected F natural, into its first key and theme. The whole of this second portion is, like the first, repeated, and ends with a quaint and beautiful coda.

It is difficult to speak too highly of these compositions, they are worthy the study of every musician, and, as the composer has been hitherto but little known in this country, their performance will be a revelation to many, although they are, perhaps, rather Chamber than Concert pieces, and can be appreciated better after private study. It is not too much to say that, with every repetition they will be better liked.

"SI OISEAU J'ETAIS, A TOI JE VOLERAIS." Henselt, 1814.

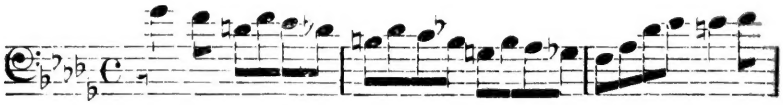
One of the most beautiful of light modern pieces. It forms one of an interesting set of studies. all of which have equally poetic titles. Henselt is a great pianist, and his compositions, though they do not rank with those of Chopin or Mendelssohn, are of so high a class as to be almost amongst the classics of the art.

WALDESRAUSCHEN,
GNOMENREIGEN,
WILDE JAGD, } ..... *Liszt*, 1811.

No. 8 of the "Etudes d'exécution transcendante."

A set of descriptive pieces, tone poems and tone pictures in one, forming an admirable illustration of the style of the high priest of modern music. The first describes the various sounds of a forest, the rustlings, the distant unaccountable echoes, the murmuring of the wind, the gradual rising of the storm, the crash of thunder, the fall of trees and the dying away of the tempest. It is not, however, merely a descriptive piece, it portrays also the emotion aroused by the scene, and the poet has succeeded in surrounding the whole with the solemn, gloomy mystery of the dark forest.

The piece opens with a graceful rapid figure in the treble which, in the hands of ordinary composers would have been merely a sensuous, eartickling piece of brilliant pianism, but, as employed by Liszt, subserves the higher purpose of poetic description. This accompanies a subject in the left hand which is almost too vague to be called an air, and yet, sufficiently coherent to be easily recognizable through all its developments. A few bars are given in order that the hearers may appreciate the skilful manner in which it is worked out.



This, after a change of key, is heard again in D flat, in octaves for the right hand, accompanied by a running bass. Then becoming interrupted by some charmingly graceful passages, it is taken in rapid interchanges between the two hands in varying keys. In this process, the subject just quoted, perhaps representing the Spirit of the Wind, or, in Wagnerian phraseology, the Wind-motive, gradually loses its temper, and becomes worked to a terrific tempest, before which we think we see the hail driving and the trees breaking. This culminates in a tremendous shake of chords which, like a roll of

thunder, dies away in echoes ; the " Wind-motive," now only a Zephyr, is heard in the bass, as at first, and the poem comes to an exquisite close, *pianissimo*.

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" The Revel of the Gnomes " is also highly poetic and fanciful. It opens in F sharp minor with a fantastic *staccato* subject, highly suggestive of grotesque forms appearing above the ground when the twilight falls. This soon changes into a wild, whirling, dancelike movement in A major full of unearthly glitter and gaiety. After a short return to the first *staccato* movement, this is repeated, in B flat, a rather startling change from F sharp minor, and rendered more so by the fact that the same chord (augmented fifth on F) is used to lead both to its first appearance, in A, and its second in B flat, an interesting instance of the importance of this chord in modern modulation. After this dance movement has been heard in the new key it flits away in broken passages, and a new element appears, a curious limping movement, as though from the gnarled roots of the forest trees had appeared a company of elderly gnomes, who commence a dance on their own account, of an entirely different character.

This is shortly invaded and broken in upon by the more impetuous revelry already heard twice, and which reappears suddenly in F sharp major. It now becomes perfectly irrepressible and, working up to passages of great speed and brilliancy, breaks off, *fortissimo*, as though that section of the elfin tribe had suddenly disappeared, leaving the staider portion to limp away after them, which they contrive to do with tolerable agility, *pianissimo* in F sharp minor. It is worthy of remark that these two pieces are intended as studies, the first for the use of the 3rd and 4th fingers, the second for rapid passing of the thumb and first finger. The composer has, however, succeeded in producing something of great artistic, as well as scholastic, value.

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When music tells a story it cannot, of course, undertake to furnish details ; therefore, all that the " Wild Hunt " gives us is the fact that something is hunting and something is hunted. The hunters may be demons or men ; what the hunted being is we cannot tell, but we do most fully realize its emotions from the musical description. Having regard to the intangible nature of music as an art, it is preferable to adopt the idea of a phantom hunt although, from the very realistic character of the piece, some may be disposed to find a more material interpretation. Whether a hare, a man, or a spirit is being

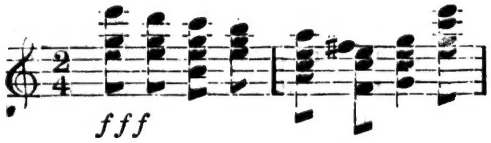
chased, the emotion is much the same, and emotion is all that music can thoroughly portray.

The opening is simply indescribable, a fierce *presto* of octaves, chords and passages in reckless confusion, it seems to suggest the headlong rush of the cavalcade at starting. All this resolves itself into the hunting song proper

followed shortly after by a breathless, hurrying motive, apparently depicting the thing hunted. It enters *pianissimo,* and consists of an air, rapid but full of pathos, with an accompaniment so accented as to give the effect of one hand playing in common time and the other in $\frac{6}{8}$ thus causing a whirling confused effect, in striking contrast to the bold rush of the hunter's song.

This subject is carried out at some length, and, after becoming more and more agitated, finally bursts out *fortissimo* as though in an agony of terror, and dies away *pianissimo.*

Then is heard the distant beat of pursuing hoofs, fitful snatches of the hunters' song seem floating along on the wind, mingled with *staccato* passages in the bass and *tremolo* in the treble. Soon, with a great burst, the hunters' song sounds close at hand, and immediately after the pleading subject of the hunted one, which finally, in its agitation, loses its character and becomes mingled with the noise of the hunters




who seem to have overtaken their prey and, with a tremendous crash of chords, the " study " closes.